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CHOU EN-LAI AND PEI-P'ING'S "PEOPLE'S DAILY" AMPLIFY CHARGES OF US BACTERIOLOGICAL WARFARE AGAINST MANCHURIA

1. Communist Statements

Two major Chinese Communist statements broadcast on March 8, 1952—a protest by Premier Chou En-lai and an editorial from the official Chinese Communist Party organ, the Pei-p'ing People's Daily—have brought the Communist-bloc campaign charging the American use of bacteriological weapons to a new climax. In these most recent statements Pei-p'ing declared that the alleged American use of bacteriological weapons against Manchuria has the "obvious aim of wrecking the armistice talks in Korea, prolonging and expanding the aggressive war in Korea, and the instigating of new wars." Pei-p'ing states that the "Resist-America Aid-Korea" campaign will proceed on an increasing scale in response to this "provocation," and that the Chinese and Korean people will "strike the savage American aggressors still heavier blows." The Pei-p'ing regime, through Chou, declared that "members of the American air force who invade Chinese territorial air and use bacteriological weapons will be dealt with as war criminals when captured." The statements asserted that the "governments of all satellite countries of the United States" now "face a critical test" and "must express their attitude" toward the alleged American war crimes. Chou En-lai declared that "now is the time for the peace-loving people of the world to rise up and put an end to the sinful designs of the United States Government." The Pei-p'ing editorial concluded that "those who advocate the halting of the American appalling crimes and make efforts to this end may yet have a chance of avoiding the pitfalls of a new war."

The latest Pei-p'ing statements follow upon a protracted campaign in which the Communists have ominously charged the US with aggressive intentions against China and in which Pei-p'ing has strongly implied that any such aggression would be met resolutely under the terms of the Sino-Soviet alliance of 1950. These earlier statements, most of which were issued by Pei-p'ing in connection with the February 14 anniversary of the Sino-Soviet Treaty, were phrased in blunt language with no equivocation. Although the corresponding Moscow statements devoted

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considerably less attention to the strategic significance of the Sino-Soviet alliance, Moscow and the satellite states participated in the general Communist campaign charging the US with aggressive intentions throughout Asia -- a campaign that began with Soviet charges at the UN General Assembly meetings in Paris concerning an American "plot" to utilize remnant Chinese Nationalist forces in Burma against Communist China.

2. Possible Interpretations

a. Defensive. The statements by Chou En-lai and the People's Daily (as well as Pei-p'ing's earlier statements) may have been issued as a defensive maneuver, intended to forestall an expected UN or US expansion of hostilities in the Far East, possibly by bringing pressure to bear to hasten a cease-fire, or, failing that, to rally a maximum of moral and other support, both in satellite and western countries, to China if the US or the UN should take military action against China itself. The February 14 statements may have been designed as a warning or threat of the consequences of such action; the present statements may have been designed to reinforce this warning and to present the possible expansion of the Korean fighting in the most unfavorable light possible. Any military action against China itself by the UN or the US following the present series of charges will be interpreted by the Communists as an admission of guilt. It is possible that Pei-p'ing's statements about the "extension" of the Korean war, and about the "pitfalls of a new war" reflect Pei-p'ing's concern at recent statements by American political and military figures discussing military, naval, and air action against China itself. Unquestionably, the present statements represent in part at least an effort to undermine the unity of the western nations fighting in Korea and to reinforce suspicions of US motives in some non-Communist circles.

b. Offensive. The series of Communist charges, beginning with the charges of US "plots" in Southeast Asia and culminating with the present statements that the US is expanding the war by using bacteriological weapons against China itself, may be a maneuver preliminary to a resumption or broadening of large-scale hostilities in the Far East, for which the Communists may now consider themselves prepared through a military and psychological build-up. The statements may have been issued in preparation for a break-down or indefinite stalemate in cease-fire negotiations that would force the US into assuming the initiative or as part of a campaign to create a moral position from which the Communists themselves could resume or extend the Korean hostilities. The Communist charge that the use of bacteriological weapons has the aim of wrecking the talks, prolonging and expanding the war, and instigating new wars, may be a reflection of Communist intentions along these lines. It should be noted, however, that whereas the earlier statements contained potential

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justifications for military actions anywhere in Asia, including Southeast Asia, the present statements refer only to Korea and Manchuria. Furthermore, the present statements contain no reference to Japanese participation in the alleged bacteriological warfare against Manchuria, and only a passing reference to earlier charges of Japanese complicity in alleged US bacteriological experiments.

c. Rationalization of an existing epidemic. If epidemics in Korea, Manchuria, and elsewhere have in fact gotten out of control, it may well be that Pei-p'ing found it necessary to rationalize the regime's failure to control these epidemics by charges that the US is utilizing bacteriological weapons, particularly since Pei-p'ing has hitherto widely publicized the achievements of the USSR in aiding the Chinese Communists in combatting plagues in China. While the Chinese Communists have admitted a heavy toll from epidemics in some areas of North China, there is as yet no evidence indicating that epidemics have reached such critical proportions as to justify a campaign on the present scale. The threatening tone of the Chou En-lai and People's Daily statements suggests rather that such epidemics as apparently exist at the present time are being used to rationalize more basic Communist policies.

d. Diplomatic maneuver. The present series of charges may be designed as a preliminary step to a Soviet effort to transfer the Korean problem to a different forum -- possibly the UN Security Council or a political conference including the USSR.

3. Conclusion

No firm conclusion as to which of the above alternatives is the most plausible can be drawn at this time. It has been reported that the Pei-p'ing regime may be seriously concerned over recent statements by American political and military figures discussing the possibility of military, air, or naval action against China itself, and that this concern is influencing Communist policies toward the cease-fire negotiations in Korea. While this may support the theory that the present statements are a defensive maneuver reflecting Chinese Communist worry at a possible extension of the war to China itself, firmer evidence would have to be looked for in such indications as the future conduct of the Korean negotiations themselves.

If, on the other hand, the present statements represent an offensive maneuver designed to prepare for a breakdown of the Korean talks and the resumption and possible extension of large-scale hostilities on Communist initiative supporting evidence will have to be drawn not only from the Far East, but also from indications in other areas regarding Communist preparedness for a more general Far Eastern war that could easily lead to World War III, since it is likely that the Communists are aware of the danger that resumed hostilities may not be confined to a limited locale.